CONSIDERATIONS

On the preſent

DANGEROUS CRISIS.

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DANGEROUS CRISIS.

COULD the preſent diviſions among the great, be conſidered ſolely with a view to the intereſt of the contending parties, a diſpaſſionate and diſintereſted ſpectator might view the conteſt with indifference; and ſmile at the littleneſs of ambition, which, to attain a precarious and ſhort-lived pre-eminence, can ſtoop to ſuch ignoble practices, as debaſe a character for ever.

Ambition, which creates to itſelf imaginary wants, is ever induſtrious to excite vain

hopes, and raiſe falſe terrors, among the public. The hopes and fears of the credulous multitude, are the inſtruments with which ambition works its way to greatneſs: And, when its votaries have thus reached the ſummit of their wiſhes, did they but know how little they appear in the eye of manly ſenſe and ſober reaſon, they would bluſh at their elevation.

With whatever ſpecious pretences the art of party may veil its ambitious deſigns, experience abundantly evinces, that intereſt and reſentment are the ruling motives which actuate the competitors. However they pretend to differ in principle, yet, when in power, they agree in purſuing the ſame corrupt and ruinous meaſures. We may learn from the recent example of *two learned bodies*, that they can even change their ſtyle with their fortunes; and that the one can, with wonderful facility, adopt the language of the other. As parties therefore, they would not be worth a moment's attention, did they not obſtruct and injure public wel-

fare, by their mutual ſtruggles to mount the airy pinnacle of promotion.

Nevertheleſs, when we reflect how much the nation ſuffers, how much the crown is diſtreſſed, by their fatal altercations, then we can no longer remain unconcerned ſpectators; nor neglect that duty, to which our amiable Sovereign has condeſcended to invite every *honeſt man*.

At the cloſe of a glorious and ſucceſsful war, who did not hope that the government would be ſtudious to cultivate the bleſſings of peace? That they would endeavour to alleviate the heavy burthens which oppreſs the public; to improve the police of the kingdom; and promote the proſperity of the people? Who did not hope, under the auſpices of a young, virtuous, and benevolent monarch, to ſee *conſtitutional* liberty triumph over corruption, and ſubdue an uſurpation, which has too long invaded the prerogatives of the crown, and the rights of the kingdom?——Which has intercepted all due communication between the King and his people, and tranſ-

ferred

ferred the reſpect and attention of the ſubject, from the Sovereign to his miniſter?

But how greatly are we fallen from our expectations! Inſtead of planning ſchemes of *public* œconomy; inſtead of providing for the purpoſes of domeſtic improvement; inſtead of emerging from the dark and filthy vale of venality, and climbing the heights of freedom and virtue; we are ſtill groveling in the ſame foul and devious tracks: And the hours of peace have been ſhamefully miſpent, in the mere routine of buſineſs, the buſtle of intrigue, and the confuſion of party diſcord.

Truth however compells me to acknowledge, that one attempt has been made towards public good, which was calculated to reſcue the ſubject from the moſt cruel of all confinements, and the moſt lamentable of all oppreſſons. Unhappily however, the care of preparing a remedy for this moſt ſhocking grievance, was entruſted to a bold, florid, ſpecious, temporizing, ambitious, pliant, vain, verſatile genius;

nius; who thinks great abilities are given only for the benefit of the owner---One, who without being convinced himſelf, has the talent of perſuading others; who, like *Carneades*, is always prepared to confute his own arguments---One, who can ſport with the ſenſibility of his hearers, and with mechanic maſtery, can ſhed tears at his own ingenious fictions——One, who amidſt the tumult of conflicting parties, yet heſitated on which ſide to throw the weight of his excelling talents; and who conſequently was not at leiſure to encounter difficulties, whereby he would reap no honour or advantage, but that of being the inſtrument of public good.

This imperfect effort excepted, no expedient for the general welfare has been even propoſed: Nay, ſince the concluſion of peace, domeſtic evils have multiplied. No proviſion has been made for the ſupport or employment of thoſe intrepid fellows, to whoſe bravery we are chiefly indebted for all our triumphs. They are ſuffered to roam abroad to the terror of their fellow ſubjects,

and

and to commit acts of violence and rapine in the broad face of day, as if there was no civil government in Britain, but all was anarchy and uproar.

To whom ſhall we impute this ſcandalous remiſſneſs, this ſeemingly wilful inattention? No one is ſo unjuſt, no one is ſo ungrateful, as to doubt the patriotic diſpoſition of the moſt truly gracious Prince, that ever filled the Britiſh throne---No *candid* man neither is ſo ungenerous, as to doubt the *diſpoſition* of the late miniſter, to aid the noble and public-ſpirited intentions of his benign maſter.

To judge impartially between Lord *Bute* and his opponents, I will recurr to the firſt dawning of his adminiſtration. From the time that Mr. *Pitt* thought proper to reſign the ſeals, becauſe he alone was not *permitted to guide* like an abſolute dictator, Lord *Bute* was ſuppoſed to hold the firſt place in his Majeſty's councils. His Lordſhip, though not unknown to the polite and learned circle, was an utter ſtranger in the political world.

world. The expectations which one party formed in his favour, could only be equalled by the prejudices entertained by its oppoſite.

Unhappily however for his Sovereign, for the nation, and for himſelf, he has proved that he has not all the requiſites neceſſary to ſtem the tide of oppoſition. He no ſooner ſtepped into the cabinet, than he ſhewed himſelf too ſecure in his royal maſter's affections, and too confident in the conſciouſneſs of his own integrity. He excited envy, by his rapid and imprudent progreſs to ſeize the helm of ſtate; and he provoked reſentment, by treating ſome of the foremoſtmen in the nation, with ungracious reſerve and ſupercilious indifference.

In ſome inſtances he ſeems to have diſplayed the mere wantonneſs of power. The circumſtance of changing the colour of his ribbon, was a parade highly impolitic. It tended to inflame the invidious, already too much exaſperated, without ſecuring to his maſter

maſter or himſelf, any ſolid advantage whatever.

Nevertheleſs the opening of his adminiſtration, was not without ſome favourable omens. He generouſly aſſiſted the laudable propenſity of his Sovereign, to befriend literature, and encourage arts and ſciences: Genius began to rear its head, and to ſtart from that obſcurity, wherein it had long pined for want of patronage. But however generoſity may have been diſplayed in acts of munificence, we cannot ſay that judgment and impartiality were always exhibited in the ſelection of proper objects.

It muſt be confeſſed that his Lordſhip's predilection for his northern compatriots, though not ſo extravagant as the malice of his enemies would inſinuate, was nevertheleſs diſcovered in inſtances too glaring to be ſuppreſſed, and too frequently repeated to be forgotten. Though this natural biaſs might be juſtified and perhaps applauded in Lord *Bute*, yet it admits of no excuſe or palliation in the ſtateſman.

Neither

Neither can his Lordſhip's warmeſt advocates juſtify his conduct, in aſſuming the unconſtitutional and ever odious power of prime miniſter; and endeavouring to bar all the avenues to the royal cloſet, againſt thoſe who were too ſpirited to ſolicit, or too much diſliked to obtain, the favour of his paſſport. This ſavoured more of the narrow policy of a favourite, than of the liberal plan of a patriot.

From the ſame contracted principle, he confined himſelf within a narrow circle of dependents, who were intereſted to conceal ſome truths, and too obſequious to create him the inquietude of hearing others. Thus environed, he became difficult of acceſs; and what is worſe, ſome who had the honour of being admitted to his preſence, were treated with all the mortifying auſterity of ſtubborn virtue.

Such was the inflexibility of his nature, that, even in public, he could not command thoſe little arts, which are often of greater uſe to a ſtateſman, than more excellent en-

dowments: His ſpeeches in a certain aſſembly, do more credit to his eloquence, than to his diſcretion. He ſpoke with all the manly firmneſs and intrepidity which a warm heart inſpires, when conſcious of its own rectitude: But he could not ſuppreſs ſeveral indiſcreet ſentiments of diſdain and defiance, which ſhewed the delicacy of a feeling mind, too ſenſibly affected by ungenerous and ſelfiſh oppoſition. His Lordſhip delivered himſelf *fortiter in re*, but he forgot that a ſtateſman ſhould expreſs himſelf *ſuaviter in modo*.

Was it prudent, in the face of the public, to make light of popularity? Could he ſuppoſe that, in a free kingdom, a miniſter could long ſupport himſelf, without ſome degree of popular favour? Did he not know, that ſuch is the obſtinacy and prejudice of the multitude, that they will ungratefully reject the choiceſt benefits, when they have been taught to diſlike the benefactor? Could he be ignorant, that an unpopular miniſter, muſt ſoon make an unpopular——? Would it not pain his honeſt mind, to be the inſtrument

ment of leſſening the public affection towards the Sovereign he ſerved, towards the Prince he loves?

To what purpoſe do the pureſt intentions of a miniſter avail, unleſs he has abilities and will, to purſue the means proper to attain the noble ends which he has in proſpect? Candor, truth, honour, fortitude, frankneſs, ſincerity and juſtice, will not ſuſtain the power of a ſtateſman, unleſs theſe virtues are tempered with good humour, patience, moderation, affability, complacency, forbearance and equanimity. Great and virtuous endowments, will ſecure the favour of the good and wiſe; but inferior and ſuperficial talents, are occaſionally neceſſary to counteract malice, and amuſe futility.

Of all the indiſcretions however which are to be imputed to his Lordſhip, that of leaguing with a hardy veteran, long hackneyed in the ways of corruption, was the moſt fatal and the moſt inexcuſable. By this imprudent aſſociation, he, in ſome meaſure, put it out of his power to do the good he meditated.

ditated. He might have been ſenſible, that ſuch a colleague, could gain him no confidence with the public; that the intereſt created by his well-known mode of influence, was not only incompatible with his Lordſhip's avowed intentions, but that, in the hour of need, it would deſert him, as it had abandoned his predeceſſor. If he had not intended to remedy the abuſes of former adminiſtrations, he ſhould not have accepted the high office he filled: As he propoſed to redreſs them, nothing could be more preposterous than to unite with the very man, who principally contributed to extend, and dared openly to avow, that corrupt ſyſtem, which his Lordſhip profeſſed to reform.

But if Lord *Bute* has been precipitate and indiſcreet, the party who have oppoſed him, have been malicious and unjuſt. The acts of his adminiſtration which they have moſt loudly impeached, are the *treaty of peace*, and the impoſition of additional duties on *Cyder*, &c. And when theſe are candidly conſidered, there will not appear to be any reaſonable

ſonable foundation for ſuch violent clamour as has been raiſed againſt them.

With regard to the Peace, all intelligent and moderate men concur in acknowledging that it is the moſt honourable and profitable for this kingdom, and the moſt diſadvantageous and humiliating to our enemies, of any that ever was concluded between the two nations? Even the great Demagogue, after a tedious, heavy, critical, equivocal, aſſenting, diſſenting, adulatory, vituperatory, evaſive, and inconcluſive harangue, was forced to admit, that the terms were better than had been offered to himſelf.

To deſtroy the merit of this improvement, it was ſaid, that we had made freſh acquiſitions ſince. True: And to counterballance thoſe acquiſitions, we were oppreſſed with an additional war, an immenſe additional debt, and increaſing difficulties. What Prince, who had an affection for his people, would refuſe reaſonable terms of accommodation, and riſk the *blood and treaſure* of his ſubjects, upon the uncertain contingency

tingency of obtaining greater advantages, at ſo dear a rate? What miniſter, who had the intereſt of his King and country at heart would give ſuch council to his Sovereign?

With reſpect to the Cyder bill, it muſt be acknowledged that it was precipitate, impolitic, and inadequate to the ſervices propoſed. Several taxes might have been deviſed, which would have been more effectual; ſcarce any could have been thought of, which would have been more unpopular. Does any ſenſible and impartial man however imagine, that it is big with all the miſchiefs which are imputed to it by the malice of party?

The noble Lord, who ſtrengthened his arguments, by reading the preamble to the bill for repealing the *hearth-money*, paſſed in the time of our great deliverer, would have done well to have recurred to an act paſſed in the ſame glorious reign *, which laid the duties of 4 s. per hogſhead on Cyder and

* The 13 William III. for granting an aid to his Majeſty by laying duties on Malt, Mum, Cyder and Perry.

Perry,

Perry. Upon comparing it with former acts, his Lordſhip might have found that even at this time when the principles of liberty were ſo well underſtood, and, in ſome inſtances, ſo glorioufly and happily aſſerted, in others it was as little regarded.

By the firſt act which laid a tax on Cyder and Perry, which was in the twelfth of Charles the ſecond, the duty was to be paid by the *Retailer*, and this was underſtood to fall on thoſe who kept public houſes. But the act of William the third, intrenches farther on the liberty of the ſubject, for it renders every honeſt farmer, every gentleman of ſmall fortune, in ſhort, every private houſe-holder who buys fruit to *make* Cyder for ſale, and there are many ſuch in the Cyder counties, liable to the viſitation of the exciſe officers.

Where then is the new encroachment on liberty?——Where is the additional badge of ſervitude, in the act lately paſſed? All the difference is that in the former the duty is payable by the maker from bought fruit, and in the latter it is payable by the

the maker generally: And even this, is no new method of taxation, for the duty on Mead and other liquors, is, by ſeveral acts, made payable by the maker generally. But it is ſaid farther, that they who make Cyder for private conſumption, are laid open to the inſpection of an exciſeman. I deny it. The act has ſcrupulouſly provided an eaſy method for their accommodation, and they are expreſly exempted from the ſurvey or ſearch of the exciſe officers, upon the payment of 5 s. per head *per annum* by way of compoſition: A duty not equivalent to the tax on ſmall beer.

Partiality and prejudice would nevertheleſs perſuade us, that the obliging perſons to compound for the private conſumption of any commodity, is a dangerous innovation and an unprecedented attack on freedom: Whereas, in fact, no proviſion is more common. We find the ſame clauſe, with regard to the malt made for private conſumption in the act of William the third, already mentioned: Indeed innumerable inſtances might be produced of theſe compounding clauſes, but I pur-

purpoſely confine myſelf to that of William the third, as it paſſed in the reign, to which theſe champions for liberty refer us for the pattern of legiſlation.

Whatever objections therefore may be made to the quantum of theſe duties, there is no reaſonable ground for the violent clamour which has been made againſt the mode of collection. Unleſs it can be proved that Cyder-makers have a right to enjoy more liberty, than the makers of other liquors.

Let no one imagine however, that I am an advocate for exciſe laws. On the contrary, I am convinced that they are *all*, in ſome degree, injurious to the principles of liberty. I am perſuaded that the arbitrary method of collecting the duties, and the ſummary juriſdiction of determining diſputes without appeal, is often the occaſion of extreme grievance and oppreſſion to the ſubject, eſpecially in the country, where juſtices of the peace have the ſame power as the commiſſioners have in London.

I well know that in the time of Charles the ſecond, when it was in agitation to ſettle the exciſe revenue on his Majeſty, in lieu of the perquiſites of the court of wards and liveries, and other feodal profits, the patriots of thoſe days vigorouſly oppoſed the exchange, on the foundation of the exciſe duties being injurious to liberty. Even they who ſupported the motion, owned the force of the objection, and were ingenuous enough to acknowledge, that they only contended for the exciſe revenue, as the *leſſer evil* of the two.

The man who could contrive ſome leſs exceptionable way of raiſing the revenue, would do a real ſervice to his country, but this is no more exceptionable than the method of collecting *cuſtom-houſe duties* in many caſes: Till ſome better expedient is deviſed, there is no room to ſay that it is any dangerous innovation to raiſe a tax on one liquor, by the ſame methods it is collected on another *.

That

* I am aware that Mr. *Mun*, Sir *Joſiah Child*, Sir *Walter Raleigh*, and other eminent writers, have contended

That the cry of "liberty and property "and no exciſe," ſhould inflame the multitude, is by no means matter of ſurprize; but that it ſhould produce the extraordinary addreſs which was ſucceſſively made to the three branches of the legiſlature, is not a little aſtoniſhing. No man can entertain a higher regard for the trading intereſt in general, and for that very reſpectable body the *City of London* in particular, than myſelf. At the ſame time, I am ſenſible that the reſolutions of that body, as well as of other bodies, are often dictated by the influence of one or a few, perhaps provoked by reſentment, miſled by miſinformation, or biaſſed by party.

That it is a right, and a neceſſary right, of the ſubject to petition the King, no friend

tended that the method of raiſing duties by an *exciſe*, is preferable to that of collecting them by the *cuſtoms*: But their arguments rather apply to the point of national profit, than of national freedom. It would be difficult however, if not impoſſible, to ſuggeſt any mode of taxation, which, without the help of much ingenuity, might not be proved in ſome degree prejudicial to liberty.

to his country will attempt to diſpute. But the more valuable this privilege is, with the greater caution and reſerve it ſhould be exerciſed. No corporate body can have any juſt pretence of interfering with the buſineſs of legiſlation, unleſs where the intereſt of their corporation in particular, or of the nation in general, is prejudiced or endangered.

It would have been highly injurious to the dignity of the crown, to have preferred the petition of a *ſingle* corporation, not immediately or ſcarce remotely affected, to the ſenſe of both Lords and Commons; eſpecially as the bill paſſed through the latter without a diviſion, and without any application from the counties aggrieved or ſuppoſed to be aggrieved.

It does not become the wiſdom of ſo conſiderable a body as the city of London to act with precipitation: For precipitation is the parent of indiſcretion and inconſiſtence. We all remember that, on a former occaſion, they made a powerful oppoſition againſt the exciſe ſcheme: We all remember likewiſe, that they afterwards in part requeſted, what they had before ſo reſolutely decried.

When

When the oppoſers of the act exclaim againſt it as an extenſion of the exciſe laws, they ſpeak equivocally and maliciouſly. They would inſinuate that ſome new powers and authorities are given to exciſemen, which render the collection of *exciſe duties* more grievous and intolerable. Whereas it only applies the long-accuſtomed method of collecting the duties on other liquors, to the collecting of the new duty upon Cyder; and nothing can be more falſe, fallacious, and unjuſt, than the conſtructions which the party in oppoſition have put upon this act: Though doubtleſs it was highly impolitic and inexpedient, to impoſe a tax which muſt be collected by ſuch odious, though accuſtomed, methods.

Such, upon a general and ſhort review, has been the tenor of the late well-intentioned but indiſcreet adminiſtration---An adminiſtration, throughout which it is difficult to determine whether his Lordſhip ſuffered moſt from his own imprudence, from the malice of his enemies, or the intemperate zeal of his friends.

I will now proceed to examine the conduct of the Oppoſition; if a little cabal, or junto, may be called by that name. At the head of theſe, who is not ſorry to ſee one, who claims public reſpect, at the ſame time that he deſerves public cenſure--One, whoſe jealouſy can endure no competitor; and whoſe haughtineſs of ſoul can bear no equal--One, who is rather ambitious to attract admirers, than to conciliate friends---One, who had rather be the Idol of the mob, than the favourite of the judicious---One, who had rather the nation ſhould ſuffer, than not be ſerved by him---One, in ſhort, whom we both envy and commiſerate?

How could *his* pride, how could *his* boaſted virtue, ſtoop ſo low, as to confederate with men whom he deſpiſes, or once affected to deſpiſe?---With men, of whom he emphatically ſaid, that "God and the "nation would never forgive them?"---- How could *he* ſo far degrade his character, as to ſuffer his name to be enrolled among a liſt of epicures, who have no other merit to diſplay before the public, than that they --EAT?

Is

Is this becoming the dignity of a great mind?—Or, can he ſuppoſe, that dignity conſiſts in a certain hardineſs of nature, which can brave all cenſure: which can ſhift parties, vary meaſures, and, with ſteady and unembarraſſed effrontery, juſtify every change and tergiverſation?---Can he imagine that the pomp of declamation can ſupply the place of true magnanimity?—Does he not know, that to ſilence men by a torrent of words, is leſs noble than to ſatisfy them by rectitude of action?—Can he be ignorant, that true dignity is diſplayed in elevation of ſentiment, ſupported by *conſiſtency* of conduct?—That this alone can give that ſuperiority, which neither fortune can purchaſe, nor titles confer—And that this alone, can make him, what he aſpires to be, *uno minor Jove?*

But while I am warm againſt the defects, let me not be thought unjuſt to the merits, of his character. As his powerful influence renders the former more dangerous, ſo the means by which he acquired that influence, have made the latter more conſpicuous. He

came, or rather ruſhed into power, at a time when the preceding miniſtry were timid and embarraſſed; rendered deſperate by their own miſmanagement, and odious by his ſpirited oppoſition. Under ſuch circumſtances, unanimity was rather the reſult of neceſſity, than choice.

I will not however adopt the invidious arguments which his enemies have urged to his diſadvantage. I will not ſay, that his ſucceſs was too dearly purchaſed; and that it was owing as much to accident, as deſign: If we criticize thus minutely, we ſhall deſtroy the merit of all miniſterial ſuper-intendence. Certain it is, that the nation has high obligations to his ſervices; he introduced a ſpirit and activity into our councils, which were diffuſed throughout every department; his application to buſineſs, eſpecially conſidering the ſhattered frame of his conſtitution, was incredible; his integrity in office was incorruptible. Envy muſt admire the virtues of his early adminiſtration; though candor muſt lament, that in the wane of his miniſtry, he deviated from

thoſe principles, which gained him the confidence of the people.

The grateful public however have acknowledged his ſervices, his gracious Sovereign has rewarded them. But the greateſt ſervices may be cancelled by ſubſequent miſconduct; the brighteſt talents may be tarniſhed by an overweening arrogance, and inſolent preſumption. Pride and reſentment may ſeduce the man, whom avarice could not corrupt: And it is indifferent to the nation, by what paſſion, the principles of public virtue are perverted.

I will venture to eſtabliſh this leading principle, that they who enliſt under the banner of party, and diſcriminate themſelves by the odious diſtinctions of *Whig* or *Tory*, never mean honeſtly. There cannot be a more convincing proof that the oppoſition to the late miniſter was founded on private and perſonal views, than its having been opened before he had taken a ſingle meaſure to juſtify either cenſure or approbation.

The advocates of the party, knew that their buſineſs was not to reaſon, but to revile; not to convince, but to miſlead; not to inform, but to inflame. To effect theſe ends, little knowledge is requiſite, and ſtill leſs judgment. As ſuch addreſs themſelves to readers who avoid the trouble of thinking, they need no higher talents than are neceſſary to make folly titter, or malignance grin.

Theſe are the triumphs of a lively fancy, and depraved judgment: And, however theſe little triumphs may flatter miſtaken vanity, or ſerve the views of ſordid intereſt, they will have reaſon to mourn the miſ-application of their talents, when late experience has convinced them, that even they who applauded the writer, concur in deteſting the man. No merit whatever can attone for the want of candor and integrity; noble requiſites, in which the advocates of the junto, have proved themſelves ſhamefully deficient.

They condemned the peace, before they were acquainted with a ſingle article of the treaty; and when the articles were publiſhed,

ed, they endeavoured to prejudice the inconſiderate againſt them, by all the artful malice of invidious miſ-conſtruction and miſ-repreſentation. From the ſame principle, they raiſed a clamour againſt the Cyder bill, and by falſe ſuggeſtions malevolently propagated erroneous notions with regard to the act, among the people *.

Had there however been any pretence for their inſinuations, yet with what countenance could they ſtep forth, as the champions of freedom, under whoſe adminiſtration, the firm baſis of liberty was undermined by ſlow and ſecret approaches---Under whoſe adminiſtration, a heavy duty was impoſed upon *adverti ſements*, &c. A duty, which has a certain, though indirect tendency, to check the free circulation of political truths, and to reſtrain the freedom of the preſs; which, however groſly it has been lately abuſed, is nevertheleſs one of the beſt and firmeſt ſecurities, for the preſervation of our rights and privileges.

* Among other falſe ſuggeſtions, they aſſerted that an exciſeman had a right to enter any houſe in the night-time, whereas the act expreſly confines their right o entry to the day-time. They affirmed likewiſe that no one could lend their utenſils; with other glaring falſehoods.

With what pretence likewiſe, could they clamour on behalf of liberty, under whoſe adminiſtration a grievous and oppreſſive tax was laid on the induſtrious and laborious part of the nation, by which the price of one article of conſumption was advanced a *ſeventh*-- A tax cruelly wrung from the briny ſweat of induſtry, and which ſeems to have been founded on no other principle, than that " in order to render the people dependent, " we ſhould begin by making them poor."

Without the aid of ſophiſtry, it is eaſy to demonſtrate that all exorbitant impoſitions, eſpecially on the neceſſaries of life, have a ſure operation to the prejudice of public freedom. Though liberty, as Monteſquieu obſerves, gives occaſion for exceſſive taxes, yet exceſſive taxes in return produce ſlavery; and it is the effect of ſlavery to cauſe a gradual decreaſe, by which the credit and intereſt of the nation is lowered, in proportion as its ſpirit is debaſed.

Had the people, on theſe occaſions been induſtriouſly exaſperated againſt the adminiſtration

niſtration which impoſed theſe oppreſſive duties, the patriot miniſter might have been rendered as unpopular and deteſtable as any of his predeceſſors: And had he continued much longer in power, the people, without a prompter, would have known where to have turned their reſentment. But when he was at the height of his popularity, he very prudently retired; and the odium, even of his own oppreſſions, was artfully transferred to his ſucceſſor.

Every grievance was imputed to Lord *Bute*, and every indiſcretion he committed, was aggravated with all the acrimony of malevolent minds bent on diſturbing domeſtic peace and tranquility. While their induſtry has been exerted in contriving the moſt effectual means of diſtreſſing the adminiſtration, the attention of government, on the other hand, has been neceſſarily employed in counteracting their artful and malicious endeavours: And thus neither have had leiſure to promote any noble and generous plans for national improvement and welfare.

But

But the people themſelves have blindly been accomplices with thoſe who are enemies to their intereſt. Artful and diſappointed men have practiſed on their paſſions, and when a flame is once raiſed, it quickly ſpreads from one to another: As it was not the power of reaſon which worked on their minds, but the influence of falſehood and calumny, ſo when they are once enraged, they do not follow the guidance of reaſon, but purſue the dictates of reſentment.

No friend to liberty will deny, but that caſes have ariſen, and may ariſe again, in which the regular method of oppoſition, would prove ineffectual to avert impending evils: Kings have ſupported miniſters and meaſures, and parliaments have ſupported them too, to the open violation of national rights. Under ſuch circumſtances, when the ordinary methods of obtaining redreſs fail, recourſe muſt be had to extraordinary remedies. Theſe however ſhould be applied with extreme caution: And there is not at preſent the leaſt pretence for ſuch irregular and tumultuous applications.

If

If a bill has paſſed the legiſlature, which is found by the public to be prejudicial to their intereſt, or injurious to their liberty, it is happy, in ſuch inſtance, that our laws are not like thoſe of the Medes and Perſians. The conſtitution has chalked out a legal method of redreſs; and it is the privilege of all ſuch as find themſelves aggrieved, to inſtruct their repreſentatives to procure a *repeal* of the obnoxious act.

No one however will preſume to ſay that the petition of a *ſingle* corporate body, and that, as I have obſerved, not immediately or ſcarce remotely affected by the act, is ſufficient to determine the judgment of the legiſlature; much leſs ought it to be influenced by the tumultuous cry of the populace, artfully excited. Civil diſcord and anarchy, muſt be the reſult of ſuch unwarrantable and unconſtitutional interpoſitions.

But the clamour which ſtill continues to rage againſt the government, clearly indicates the narrow and ſelfiſh deſigns of thoſe who head the party. Lord *Bute* has yield-

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ed to the prejudices of the people againſt him, and, by a prudent reſignation, has conſulted the quiet of the kingdom. This ſacrifice however will not ſatisfy the views of his opponents. They ſeem bent on oppoſition, whoever is in office; and would perſuade the public that the late miniſter ſtill directs the affairs of ſtate: Which they will ever pretend, till they are in power themſelves; and all their ſpecious harangues, amount to this declaration: "We will never ſuffer the government to be at reſt, till we can force *ourſelves* into power."

To this end, they have formed a motly heterogeneous junto, compoſed of aſſociates, who moſtly hate or deſpiſe each other: Of which the chiefs have been in open oppoſition to, and have mutually reviled each other, as incapable of government, and as enemies to their country. Thus we are in a miſerable ſituation, too ſimilar to that which Monteſquieu deſcribes, in his reflections on the effects reſulting from the conſtitution of *England*.

" Every individual therein," ſays he, " being independant, will follow his own " whim and caprice, he will frequently " ſhift from one party to another, and for- " ſake that in which he leaves all his friends, " to attach himſelf to one where he meets " with all his enemies; and the natives of " that kingdom will often violate both the " laws of friendſhip and thoſe of hatred."

" The Sovereign will be in the ſame ſi- " tuation with individuals, and, in oppoſi- " tion to the common dictates of prudence, " will be obliged to repoſe confidence in " thoſe who have offended him moſt, and " to diſgrace thoſe who have ſerved him " beſt, doing that from neceſſity, which " other princes do by choice.

" The people will be afraid to loſe ſome " imaginary advantage, of the nature of " which they are ignorant, and which may " eaſily be repreſented to them under various " diſguiſes: And fear magnifies every ob- " ject. They will be reſtleſs in their ſitua- " tion, and think themſelves in danger, in " the moments of their greateſt ſecurity.

" They will be the eaſier deceived, ſince " they who oppoſe the *executive power* with " the greateſt vehemence, *not daring to* " *avow the intereſted motives of their oppo-* " *ſition*, will attempt to *aggravate the terrors* " *of the people*, who will *never be able to* " *judge preciſely whether they are in danger* " *or not.*"

Who would not imagine that Monteſquieu was here deſcribing the preſent cabal? Who does not ſmile to hear the advocates of the junto inveigh againſt the dangerous effects of corruption, when they reflect that ſome of the foremoſt in the liſt, were likewiſe foremoſt in extending that corrupt ſyſtem, which they now affect to condemn?

Should there be ſome among them however, who never perſonally ſtooped to practiſe the arts of venality, ſuch would do well to conſider, that the deſire of acquiring power, often corrupts men, as much as the reſolution to maintain it. Men will as readily ſubmit to mean drudgery, for the ſake of getting a place, as to ſecure one when gotten.

Cor-

Corruption as often ſprings from oppoſition to power, as from the abuſe of power. It is true the leaders of oppoſition have neither places nor penſions to beſtow on their followers, but they have them in view, and in the mean time they can ſcatter falſehoods, and diſſeminate calumnies. Even a *round of dinners*, and the vanity of being ſeated at a ſplendid table, may corrupt ſome inconſiderate minds.

Popularity itſelf, however noble it may ſound, has been the inſtrument of infinite corruption. Whoever miſleads the people by falſe and ſpecious repreſentations, whoever inflames their paſſions without juſt cauſe of reſentment, corrupts them as effectually, and more fatally, than he who ſcatters money amidſt the throng. The zeal purchaſed by gold, will ſooner cool, than the miſguided rage of paſſion will ſubſide. The people of *Athens* were as much corrupted by the ſeditious harangues of their Demagogues, as ever a certain aſſembly in *England* was by the wealth of the treaſury.

There certainly never was a time when the language of oppoſition was more daring and inflammatory. During the unhappy times of the civil wars, when the brave patriots of thoſe days oppoſed the oppreſſions of government ſword in hand, they yet uſed their pens with diſcretion; and paid ſome reſpect to their Sovereign, and to themſelves, by obſerving a due decorum and dignity in their remonſtrances.

But now, not only perſons in power, but the very principles of government are attacked with the moſt flagrant and indecent licentiouſneſs. Nay Majeſty itſelf is traduced in ſuch audacious terms of inſult, as no man could offer to his equal with impunity.

We may venture to affirm that the liberties taken with the ſpeech from the throne, in a late publication, almoſt exceed the bounds of credibility, as much as they tranſgreſs thoſe of order, decency and truth. When *James* the *ſecond* made a warm anſwer to an addreſs from the commons, Mr. *Coke*, who ſeconded the motion for taking the anſwer into conſideration, only added— "I hope we

are all *Engliſhmen*, and are not to be frighted out of our duty by a few high words." For this expreſſion, the houſe unanimouſly ſtigmatized him as an *incendiary*: And *reſolved* that " for his indecent and undutiful reflection on the King and the houſe, he be committed to the *Tower*:" And he was committed accordingly.

The brave but diſcreet patriots of theſe days did not think they had a right to treat his Majeſty's anſwer, as an anſwer dictated by the miniſter. If they expreſſed ſuch indignation againſt ſo comparatively ſlight a reflection on one of the moſt arbitrary princes that ever filled the Britiſh throne— againſt a reflection too made *within the houſe*; where every member has liberty of ſpeech--- What would *they* have thought of one, who, *out of the houſe*, ſhould caſt the moſt infamous aſperſions on one of the beſt of *Sovereigns*, and on *both houſes of parliament*? — What would *they* have thought likewiſe of a noble Lord, who ſhould degrade his quality by appearing publickly in a court of juſtice, to give countenance to ſuch an offender, as if, by his preſence, he meant

to

to encourage and up-hold ſedition, in open defiance of his country's laws?

Such writers, together with their patrons and adherents, under the ſpecious maſk of being friends, are in truth the moſt dangerous foes, to freedom. By their boundleſs licentiouſneſs, they afford the only plauſible pretext for reſtraining the moſt valuable of all rights—the liberty of the preſs.

But the leaders of the preſent oppoſition ſeem to entertain no other idea of liberty, than the privilege of exerciſing their own lawleſs will. They boldly trample on the laws of the land. Even while the cauſe of their ſeditious advocate is depending before the judges at Weſtminſter, they appeal from the juſtice of the court, to the paſſions of the multitude. They caſt inflammatory hand-bills into every houſe, and diſtribute them to every paſſenger: Which is a moſt flagrant contempt of the court, and a moſt atrocious effort to excite civil diſcord.

If

If unconſtitutional attempts like theſe muſt prevail—If turbulent and ambitious ſpirits who oppoſe *every change* of adminiſtration---who are determined to diſturb every government which they do not guide themſelves—who would give laws to their Sovereign, and over-rule the legiſlature—If ſuch men, are ſuffered to enflame the populace to acts of outrage and ſedition, to promote their own intereſted and licentious purpoſes---then the boaſted conſtitution of this country, muſt ſoon degenerate into an *Ochlocracy*, and there is an end of government.

It is amazing that the people, who have been ſo often the dupes of credulity, ſhould be ſtill ſo blind to their intereſt, as not to perceive that theſe men only uſe them as a ladder, to reach preferment; and that when they have gained the topmoſt round, they will ſpurn at them, and requite them, as they have formerly done for their madneſs and folly.

Let them peruſe the liſt of the *banqueting* junto, and ſee whether there is one, among

among the chiefs, who, when in office, did not purſue the meaſures he had before condemned?---Who, ſoon after his entrance into power, did not haſten to make his peace with the government, by adopting, nay by exceeding, the ſyſtem of his predeceſſors?---Let them examine, whether there is one, who has not concurred in loading them with heavy burthens and oppreſſions?

It would be happy for the public, if, before it is too late, they could be perſuaded that they do themſelves a real injury, by eſpouſing the quarrels of party competitors, whoſe perſonal conteſts no more concern public intereſt, than do the diſputes of the Divan. Their ſhameleſs and intereſted oppoſition would ſoon ceaſe, if it was not ſupported by popular prejudice.

While the public continue to add fuel to the flame of party contention, we can never expect to reap the bleſſings of peace. After having triumphed over our enemies, we ſhall fall a prey to domeſtic diſcord. By our inteſtine diviſions, which perhaps they ſecretly

ſecretly foment, they will ſecure thoſe advantages, which they could not acquire by force of arms. The maxim of one of their ableſt politicians, will be unhappily exemplified--- "That by giving us peace, and leaving us to our party broils and contentions, we ſhall more effectually ſerve their views, than they can accompliſh them by any efforts of their own."

Amidſt this rage of party, what man of honour, ſpirit, and ability, does not enter into the ſervice of government, with reluctance?---what man, who holds an office upon ſuch uneaſy and precarious terms, can compoſe his mind, and with calm and ſteady attention, meditate ſchemes for national relief and improvement?

Under theſe unfortunate circumſtances likewiſe, who does not feel for a young, virtuous and benevolent prince, whoſe amiable diſpoſition inclines him to diffuſe happineſs among all his ſubjects; and who is ungratefully diſtreſſed by the arts of a lawleſs oppoſition; againſt which he nobly ſupports himſelf by his own conſcious virtue, and native dignity of mind?

This kingdom ſeems to be as much in danger from national diſcord, as from the national debt: And we can never hope to be relieved from the burthen of the latter, or from any other oppreſſion, till we are freed from the grievance of the former.

There will be no end to *perſonal* oppoſition, and ſtruggles for power, unleſs a firm reſolution is taken, never to admit any member of a cabal into any department of the adminiſtration. We have tried them. We know them. They have trodden thoſe paths, which, they once told us, led to bankruptcy and bondage. When they find, that by enflaming the paſſions of the multitude, they cannot force themſelves into office, they will ceaſe their florid declamations, and ſeditious writings. By degrees, *their* oppoſition, which is grafted on *intereſt*, will be ſuperſeded by an oppoſition founded on *ſentiment*---The only one, which can be of ſervice to the public. This will produce a noble competition, who ſhall beſt adviſe for the public welfare. *Meaſures*, not *men*, will then be the ſubjects of debate. Oppoſition will be confined to its proper office, and to its proper *ſeat*.

But

But perhaps the moſt effectual method of reſtoring domeſtic peace and tranquility, would be that of diſcountenancing both parties indiſcriminately. Sure the nation is not yet ſunk ſo low, but that there are ſome honeſt, independent, moderate *neuters* among us, who have never walked in the trammels of either party. If, among theſe, our gracious Sovereign ſhould judge it expedient to ſelect ſome in whom he could repoſe a confidence, and whom he could entruſt with the firſt poſts of government, ſuch an impartial choice might probably contribute to defeat the deſigns of party, and to reconcile the miſtaken and prejudiced public *.

This expedient has been formerly practiſed, and has been attended with ſalutary ef-

* The writer was aware that this expedient would, by many, be deemed impracticable. But it will appear leſs ſo, when it is conſidered, that even *two* or *three* leaders of moderation, integrity and ability, will be ſufficient to diffuſe a ſpirit of impartiality among the Public, and to deſtroy all diſtinctions of party. That ſuch there are, the author is perſuaded; though it would not become him to name them. Beſides, he had a latent meaning in the above propoſition, which it may not be prudent to explain, but which the ſagacious reader will eaſily conceive.

fects. When the ridiculous and deteſtable party diſtinctions of *Whig* and *Tory*, were at the higheſt pitch of enmity and madneſs: Even then, ſome upright, able, and moderate neuters, ſuch as the noble Earl of *Pembroke*, and others, were called into action, and by their conduct juſtified the election of their Prince.

Many ſuch doubtleſs there are now, who are detached from all party connections, and enjoy philoſophic eaſe in an innocent and unambitious retreat. Such may be diſcovered by the diſcernment of our Sovereign, and by his gracious goodneſs may be encouraged to undertake the arduous taſk of quieting the oppoſition of party, and rectifying the prejudices of the public.

But the people likewiſe muſt do their parts; and, by keeping within the line of their duty, be juſt to themſelves. Whenever they tranſgreſs the bounds of the conſtitution, they are guilty of deviations to their own prejudice. There is, in truth, no *oppoſition* between the *prerogatives* of the crown, and the *privileges* of the people. They

They are like different movements in one piece of mechaniſm: And whether one or the other moves irregularly, the machine is equally diſordered. It is the privilege of the people, to be governed according to the law of the conſtitution. The prerogative is part of that law: It was entruſted with the crown, for the benefit of the people; and whenever they invade it, they do injury to their own privileges.

Licentiouſneſs in the people, is as ſurely ſubverſive of the conſtitution, as tyranny in the crown. As malice itſelf cannot impute any unconſtitutional attempt to the Sovereign, may the people, from a regard to their own intereſt, obſerve the ſame ſcrupulous conformity! May they no longer be miſled and enflamed by ſeditious and deſigning men! May they attend to the dictates of reaſon! May they adhere to the law of the conſtitution! And leave the madneſs of party to vent its impotent rage, unbefriended, unaided, and unpitied.

FINIS.

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